I am sending You

"Jesus said to them, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you'." Jn. 20:21

All doubts vanished from the minds of these disciples. They knew it was the Lord Jesus alive! They were very glad and filled with looks of wonder and words of worship. Again Jesus said to them, ***"Peace be with you"***. (Jn. 20:19)

In Isaiah 26:3 we have the words, "Peace, peace". In the ESV this is translated "Perfect peace". In Isaiah 57:19 it is just "Peace, peace". Perhaps when the Lord Jesus first said it to them the very first time they were still in shock at seeing Him. But the second time He wished His peace on them there must have been a radiant assurance.

Then the Risen Lord Jesus **commissioned them**. Each Gospel records this commissioning .(Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:48 and again in Acts 1:8) But John, in his Gospel, gives greater emphasis to the fact that the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father (3: 17, 34; 5: 36; 6: 29, 57; 7: 29; 8: 42; 10: 36; 11: 42; 17:3) He had been sent by the Father. (Jn. 10:15; 13:34; 15:9) So now they would be sent by the Son. The implication is not that it is a new commission but rather to fulfil the task given to Him by His Father.

How was the Lord Jesus sent? How did he come? He came in lowliness of mind. ***"I am meek and lowly in heart."*** (Mt. 11:29) He was equal to the Father in glory – a partner of His throne. But His Father "gave" His only Son. He lived with the poor and humble. He had nowhere to lay His head. He died in great agony and huge shame. Paul says, ***"Even Christ did not please himself"***. (Rom. 15:3) His whole life was absorbed in the need to do the works of Him who sent Him while it was day (Jn. 9:4). In Jn. 4:34 He said, ***"My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work."*** He died on the Cross with that great victors shout, ***"It is finished!"*** (Jn. 19:30)

"I am sending you"

We are sent to walk with God in lowliness and submission to His will. But sadly we are often spiritually arrogant. We think we are better than our neighbours. We are spiritually ambitious and seek our own ends. The measure to which this is true is the measure of our failure. We ought to be "living letters" able to be read by all so they can judge the Lord Jesus by what they see in us.

The Lord Jesus was sent for the salvation of the world. He never grew weary of making known the great reason why He came. ***"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."*** (Jn. 3:17)

He came to very lowly, needy people to lift them up to the heights of glory. He came that they might have abundant life. (Jn. 10:10) He came to be a friend of sinners. He came to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to those enslaved; to give sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed. (Lk. 4:18-19) He came as the Shepherd to seek and save the lost. He came as the Man of Sorrows, wearing out His life as He trod the path of service – the path of surrender of rights – the path of suffering and sacrifice. ***"For the Son of Man came … to minister and give His life a ransom for many."*** (Mk. 10:45)

So the one supreme purpose for which we, as followers of the Lord Jesus, exist is to bring men and women to the Lord Jesus. It would be as easy for the Lord Jesus to convert people as to create a new star. But He doesn't act in arbitrary omnipotence. He has chosen to limit Himself to work through His disciples. He has called us to carry on His mission. And that is why He pleads with us afresh to give ourselves to Him even as, through the Eternal Spirit, He gave Himself to the Father. He is still seeking to send us out in His name to be as loving as He was loving.

So those early disciples (probably less than 20) were to be His messengers to all people everywhere. They would face a huge task in the midst of a cold and critical world. They were to preach the Gospel to every nation. They knew their weaknesses, but they had seen His hands and His side and heard His voice. They knew what it cost Him and they knew what it might cost them, but how could they refuse?

I am a child of His terrible agony and so are you. By the wounds and wrongs He suffered and by the love and the life He poured out. He prays for you still to hear His voice saying, "***I am sending you***".

May it be so as we think again about His taking on our humanity and coming into our world. May this be the most meaningful Christmas ever!